edge, in a way shown, there would be a great saving of wood by a thinner plank. This struck Nicholson as being practical, and the next morning the lines were devised, laid down, and presented to Graham. Of this circumstance I was informed by Nicholson and Graham themselves.

The work entitled, "The Joiners' Assistant," which followed, Nicholson informed me, owed its existence to the following circumstance. He had, he said, involved himself in debt during the publication of the "Carpenters' New Guide," and was thrown into prison in consequence. To extricate himself from "durance vile," he applied to the late Mr. Taylor, the architectural publisher and bookseller, in Holborn, who promised to pay the debt on his engaging to publish "The Joiners' Assistant," which he did, and was again set at liberty.

The small octavo work on the "Five Orders of Architecture," a useful didactic production, published by Taylor, soon after followed.

The next work he brought out was what he has called the "Principles of Architecture," in three octavo volumes. The first contains geometry and mensuration—the second, ornaments and rules for projecting shadows, which latter appears to have been suggested by Thomas Malton's work on "Perspective:"—the third contains examples of the orders of architecture, from Desgodetz, a French author, and Stuart, an English one, which latter threatened to punish both author and publishers, Byfield and Gardner, for plagiarisms. Soon after the completion of this work Peter Nicholson left London in embarrassed circumstances for his native city, Glasgow, where he commenced as an architect with a person of the name of Read, to whom he left the concern some years after, and again started for London.

During the time he was at my house the late Thomas Telford, the eminent engineer, wrote P. Nicholson a letter from Carlisle, saying he did not know his circumstances, but that he had recommended him to the magistrates as the fittest person for the architect and surveyorship of the county of Carlisle, at a salary of 300*l.* a-year, as the place was then vacant. Nicholson advised with me on the subject, and I recommended him to accept it, which he did. He held it but a short time before he was supplanted by another person, for what reason must remain a secret. He now again returned to London, and set up an architectural drawing-school in Oxford-street, and commenced the publication of his "Architectural Dictionary," which came out in 7*s.* parts. The copyright he had sold to Barfield, the publisher, in Wardour-street. After the Dictionary was completed he engaged with Mr. Kelly, the publisher and bookseller in Paternoster-row, for the publication of the "Practical Builder," which work Mr. Kelly himself suggested, and in which he wished to have incorporated some of the plates of "Carter's Architectural Work," which he had by him in two thick quarto volumes. This is the best of Peter Nicholson's works, as he has here embodied all that was valuable in his former publications, most of which were transcripts.

Although Nicholson had bound himself not to take any of the plates from the "Architectural Dictionary" for any other publication (which he was too much in the habit of doing), he here violated his agreement, and a Chancery suit was the consequence, brought on by Mr. Byfield against Nicholson and Kelly. Mr. Kelly, who made affidavit that he was ignorant of the plagiarisms, was obliged to discontinue Nicholson's name to his work, and Nicholson suffered severely in pocket from the law suit.

The last time I saw Peter Nicholson was in Holborn, much depressed in spirits, when he told me he was going to leave London for Northumberland, to lay out some building-ground which had been purchased by his brother-in-law, and that he was going to conduct the erection of the buildings. How long he was engaged there I am unable to say; however, he afterwards removed to Carlisle, where I have been informed he became a co-partner with a schoolmaster, and there ended his days some years back. Since this his son, Michael Angelo Nicholson, who had been keeping an architectural drawing-school in Euston-crescent, New-road, in London, has died also.

Nicholson in his person was rather large and strong made, and well calculated for enduring fatigue. He was not acute nor ready of conception, being always absorbed in thought. He seemed dull at first, but never ceased his inquiries with those persons who had discovered something in mechanics which he did not know; but whenever he understood it, he never afterwards lost sight of it, and by publishing these discoveries made them his own. Some of his works were formed by this means, and the remainder was the result of labour and intense application. Sundays and week-days were alike to him. "There is no rest to the wicked," he often used to say, "and that he had always gone to work in his studies like a blacksmith on his anvil." Nicholson had no taste for a grand or fine building as a whole; which is evident to the meanest capacity if they will but inspect those designs in his Architectural Dictionary, under the head of HOUSE. Nor did he understand the different styles of architecture, or he would not have introduced a heterogeneous compound church of his son Michael Angelo's design into Kelly's work, which he there describes as being in the Grecian style, the same having a polygonal spire on a tower, which spire is of the Plantagenet period. Construction of the anatomical parts of a building was Nicholson's forte; he was a good mechanic and mathematician, but an indifferent architect; he introduced too much geometry into those of his best works, and his lines for tracing the face moulds for the hand-rails of staircases are unnecessarily crowded. Staircase-work he much delighted in, which he has developed in every possible form, and on this improvement in joinery his fame mainly depends; but there is much yet in staircase-work for the young operative mechanic to learn, which is well known to those who are now practising in the large builders' shops in London, Manchester, Liverpool, and Leeds.

As objects of invention are objects of our regard, I shall, in concluding this characteristic sketch, observe, that the method of forming the riser of the curtail step, by Peter Nicholson, now in general use, he copied, by request, from a school-drawing of mine, which he has since published in his works on stairs, and also another of mine, showing how, by a simple method, the scroll of the hand-rail may be increased or diminished in the revolutions, both without either my consent or his acknowledgment.

Queen's-buildings. R. BROWN.

THE STANDING OF ARCHITECTS.

VARIOUS suggestions have been made in the columns of THE BUILDER to regulate the management of competitions. It has been proposed to bind architects down not to send designs where the premium offered was so miserably inadequate, or where the free action of the architect was so restricted and hampered, as is but too often the case. A question has been raised, too, as to architects being diplomaed. Now, from these several points, it is evident that there is a very general feeling amongst architects to elevate the standard of the profession—to stamp architecture as a gentlemanly calling. At the same time, it is more than questionable that the means proposed will conduce to that end. One thing seems to be quite certain—all idea of coercion must be completely and entirely abandoned. Instead, Mr. Editor, of architects thinking it necessary to write dissuasive letters for your columns, on the announcement of competitions, it should be taken for granted that the profession will not be content to throw away their time and money upon the bare chance of obtaining a slender premium, or upon terms that would derogate from the dignity and self-respect of gentlemen. At all events, if they are disposed to do so, in pity's name let them.

That a number of persons call themselves architects who are not entitled to the name by any right of education is pretty notorious. However, such are usually employed upon the lower class of buildings, which, if truth must be told, are not infrequently the most remunerative, on account of the insignificant number of details and working drawings required. Against competition with these individuals a diploma would be but of slight use. For Mr. A. being about to build a factory, or, Mr. B. a warehouse, naturally looks about him to see by whom he can get his plans made at the cheapest rate. His motto through life has been to "buy in the cheapest markets and to sell in the dearest." He cares not a fig about the man being properly qualified to practise. He wants a building of a certain number of stories, with such and such rooms for warehousing and other purposes. A joiner or a mason will readily furnish plans at a very trifling cost.

It is evident, then, that architects cannot compete with men who are perfectly satisfied if they give up the whole of their time for 30*s.* per week. So that, however much a diploma may be wanted to mark the distinction between accredited and non-accredited practitioners, the possession of it would not operate very differently to the present system. If architects are bent upon achieving a position in society, it must be done, not by angry and indignant philippics against committees and boards of guardians (as the sending or not sending of designs is a purely optional matter)—not by dictatorial arrogance and petty narrow-minded restrictions,—but by *so cultivating their talents as to show themselves really superior to pseudo-architects in intelligence, good breeding, taste, and refinement.*

In the higher branch of architecture (that is to say, ecclesiastical), to whom are we mainly indebted for literary efforts? To whose guidance, critical acumen, and judgment, do we owe the most? Not to professional architects, but to the Hopes, Petits, and Paleys—the Freemans and Pooles of architectural societies. I by no means think of underrating the value of the illustrated works that are constantly emanating from the press, under the editorship of the profession. Still, useful as these works are, and indicating, as they do, a very proper desire on the part of their authors to advance the interest and enlarge the knowledge of the science of which they are votaries, more than this is required to render visible the claims of architecture to be styled a liberal calling. An architect should be something more than a living pencil, or a compendium of mouldings and details. He should be remarkable for his intellectual attainments, as well as his refined taste, in all matters connected with art. Let the rising generation (if I may be allowed the expression) of architects cultivate their minds at the same time as they are perfecting themselves in mere artistical execution of their drawings. Let the example of the amateurs of architectural societies excite in them an honourable emulation to be equally well versed in the theory of architecture. Let architects contribute no less by their pens than by their pencils to the expansion and development of the science we all love.

Then may we indeed hope that architecture, having attained a literary position, may also have a place assigned her in the ranks of the *learned* professions, which, instead of being three, as at present, will become then a *partie quarrée*.

P. P. C.

I believe the profession generally would concur in the opinion of your correspondents, that some step should be taken to promote the respectability and responsibility of its practitioners; but I do not think that they are by any means unanimous as to the manner in which these objects are to be attained. To convert the profession into a guild, or close corporation, would not only be contrary to the spirit of the times, but would be full of practical injustice to such men as Rickman, who educate themselves for the profession and serve no apprenticeship to it. The public might be assisted to the selection of their advisers, by the institution of examinations, and the award of diplomas; but the want of success which attends the exclusive privileges of attorneys and medical men does not encourage any similar attempts amongst ourselves.

The subject of professional charges is, perhaps, of primary importance; and these should be independent of the amount expended, but in proportion to the work done; something, I fancy, after the manner of the attorney's bill of costs; but, if the architect's estimate is exceeded, then a *pro rata* deduction should be made for the amount of his charges. It is the carelessness of the profession (to use no harsher term), in the preparation of their

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